

# ACT Heritage Library Manuscript Collection

## Interview with John Carson - Timed Summary

JOHN CARSON - TOPICS	TIMELINE (END)
Introduction – Glasgow origins – immigration to Australia – worked for foreman named Lamont – qualified electrical fitter (ship’s electrician) -	1:55
Worked all over Canberra – electricity supplier did everything – main problems sewage works – schools – public buildings – first project was Administration Building -	3:05
Powerhouse work – motors for conveyor belts, pumps, etc – some jobs required rewinding the motors – could be up to 3 tonnes in weight – hand crane was used -	5:30
Apprentice named Bernie Tregeallis (sp?) – could not recall – Graham Wortal and Artie Shields worked there – others mentioned – various “gangs” named after foremen – mainly divided on work types – say high and low voltage - Kelly gang worked on mainly cables and transformers and jointing and substation – his own gang took run of the mill maintenance work – BTH was very important for Naval transmitting – repair to the windings took some weeks	8:09
[Some background noise in recording] – describes other machinery they cared for – “Brush-Lundstroms” – Bellose and Morcombe (sp?) – worked in boiler room as well – motor for conveyors belts – old fashioned “white metal” bearings – Dick Quince would make new bearings -	13:05
Chain grate conveyor mechanism description – not aware of what ash was used for in Canberra – but in Sydney ash was used in concrete -	14:51
Could not comment on technology because it was first powerhouse he had seen – compared to ships he was familiar with it was pretty good – understood the boiler was state of the art at the time – made in Glasgow!	16:12
Economiser room – cut down from half its original size – forced draft – vague on details	16:50
Powerhouse whistle – 8 am 12 noon and five pm – bundy system – set with power house	18:24

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whistle – foreman of the day stated that is not good – checked with Mt Stromlo observatory and found the whistle was only 30 seconds out – man watched the clock and pulled the whistle – after shutdown used compressed air – could hear it miles away even Ainslie -	
Living at Canberra Ave – called Kingston Flats – quite close – workers were pretty scattered around Canberra – Tom Trevillian lived close (supervisor) – good bloke – straight up and down – replaced by George “Seine” (Saint?) – approximately 1950 when Tom retired – other names of people who worked there? – Harry Trevillian (Tom’s son) shift engineer – Mick Ozerskis – Billy ???? – Darcy McGee – Al Farrer was shocked in switchyard and was lucky to survive – John was in workshop when it happened – accidentally touched overhead wires -	22:35
Atmosphere in power station – good high building – a lot of airspace – did not find it too warm – often a draft in the place – did not worry about noise – pretty normal levels of noise -	24:10
Other events – always something happening – most of time everyone cooperated – motivated workforce –	25:41
Relation to NSW power grid – not qualified to say – Bill Gray was shift engineer and would sometimes increase voltage to allow for heavy loads -	27:11
Powerhouse view from wider community? – just accepted as fact – only time they worried was during electrical blackouts – did not really feel anything when the station was shut down – machinery sold off in 1960s – he was not aware of what was happening – still a shame they huge engine was not left there for heritage value -	30:00
Condensers and pumps – had to fit a motor to one of them – open winding – could get dirt in it and was hard to keep clean – everything was kept clean – economics shut it down – just like Tamworth -	33:19
Staff structure – superintendant, shift engineer, boiler room (fireman) not many per shift – say three men – not a lot of people – about ten per shift total – engine room – included electrical operators (one per shift) – quite streamlines really -	36:08
Power transmission – generated at 5.5 Kv – then to transformers – which were 11Kv – later updated to higher voltage -	37:00
Other work with power authority – looked after sewage pumps, schools, etc – retired in 1980 (open heart surgery) -	38:46